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ABSTRACT

This profile in outline form of the English language teaching situation in Malta discusses the role of English in Maltese society and in the educational system. The most significant changes that have taken place since 1971 include the increasing importance given to Maltese, its greater use as a national and official language, and the new emphasis on the teaching of Arabic and Italian. All these changes have directly affected the role of English. The place of English in the curricula of primary, secondary, and tertiary education is outlined, as well as its place in educational broadcasting. The status of the English teaching staff, teacher training, and instructional materials are also dealt with, as well as the role of English outside the educational system and British and American support for the teaching of English. A short bibliography of current research concludes the profile. (CLK)

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ENGLISH-TEACHING INFORMATION CENTRE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROFILE

October 1977

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Country: MALTA

1. Role of English

1.1 Changes since 1971

1.1.1 Since the 1971 edition of this Profile, changes have taken place in Malta which have affected the role of English in education and in national life. The most significant, perhaps, are the increasing importance given to Maltese, its greater use as a national and official language (see paragraph 1.2.5) and the new emphasis on the teaching of Arabic and Italian. The British Council Representative's 1975/76 Malta Annual Report observes, inter alia, that in the recent past few Maltese would have thought of using Maltese on an official occasion, but that 'to-day at every Headmaster's prize-giving or Ministerial function Maltese is de rigeur'. As recently as 1976 news in English on Malta Television was discontinued. There have, in fact, been constant minor erosions of the prestige of English, which, even if they do not immediately endanger its position, certainly reduce the motivation towards learning it and could in the long term damage the standards achieved.

1.1.2 The effects of 'secondary education for all' introduced in 1970, had not by 1971 been felt to any extent - indeed are only now being felt - but it is worth noting that when, in 1970, 30 new general secondary schools were created, the combined 1st form enrolment for all types of secondary education was 11,000 pupils as against 1,300 in 1969. Even though the 'elitist' grammar-type secondary schools, with admission by 11+ examination, continued in existence until 1972, the sudden expansion inevitably brought about some dislocation of curricula and instruction and no doubt, also, some dilution of standards in the new schools. Confusion as to aims and methods also arose through the employment of the old teachers in the new schools without re-training.

1.1.3 However, the major educational reform we are concerned with is that implemented in 1972 by the new Labour Government, viz the amalgamation of all secondary schools into one comprehensive system based on area secondary schools, with automatic admission for children who had completed year VI of primary school, the abolition of the 11+ examination and of all annual school-based examinations. Classes were unstreamed and mixed-ability, and promotion was by age and automatic. In 1974 the raising of the school leaving age to 16 produced a further expansion for which schools were unprepared. Public and official disquiet led to the establishment of national annual examinations in secondary schools from 1974 on, promotion by attainment and a gradual return to a limited form of selectivity within the comprehensive framework, including a system of options (see paragraph 2.2.4) and culminating in 1977 in the establishment of the national Primary Year VI examination the concentration of certain subjects in selected schools and admission to Trade Schools by competitive examination.

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1.1.4 The effects of these changes and reversals are discussed in paragraph 8. What follows is the description of a system in which, despite political ends and emotional means, despite ambivalence of policy and decisions of expediency and despite educational uncertainties, English is still vital to the national life, essential in administration, academic and social life and the professions, and will remain necessary for international survival until something else replaces it.

1.2 English as a medium of instruction and communication

1.2.1 English is no longer so general a medium of instruction throughout the educational system. Its role in school varies widely, not only from area to area, but from school to school, and even within the same school. There is no easily observable pattern and, as yet, no publicly defined policy, as to the extent to which English should be the medium, its use depending on socio-economic and environmental factors rather than on purely paedagogic considerations or on policy.

1.2.2 In general, however, it may be said that the private schools (or at any rate the better ones), both primary and secondary, use mainly English as a medium, except for subjects Maltese, Religion and Maltese History, continue to achieve high standards of performance in both written and spoken skills, and present a high proportion of candidates at the 'O' and 'A' level examinations in English and other subjects. In the Government sector the picture is less uniform. It is still possible to find schools, notably girls schools, in socially privileged areas, with streams of high educational home background, which compete on near equal terms with the private schools. In the same schools,however, there will be low ability streams in which English as a medium is restricted. In the socially deprived areas (rural and depressed urban) standards of English are correspondingly low and its use as a medium diminished, in some cases virtually disappearing.

1.2.3 At primary level in the Government sector English hardly exists as a medium, except in isolated pockets of excellence; the purpose of language instruction being, among other things, to prepare children to cope with a large part of the secondary curriculum in English. For the majority of subjects, particularly the science subjects, at secondary level the textbooks, for economic and other reasons, are in English and published in UK. Hence, the minimum that is required at primary, if the normal processes of education are to continue at secondary, is the attainment of a high standard of reading competence, together, ideally, with full integration of other skills. This is rarely attained. The writer has observed schools in which instruction in English and with English textbooks proceeds impeccably and where, in consequence, a high proportion of GCE passes is achieved, but a more normal picture would be that of a class using, say, a science textbook in English, but with the actual teaching and explanations (and certainly all the discussion) carried out in Maltese; or even of a teacher simply using the English textbook for the lesson and translating it into Maltese for the class as he goes along. The extent to which this is done appears to depend very much on the dynamism (or lack of dynamism) of individual teachers and heads, as much as on the school itself, but it would seem that in the middle and lower parts of the scale there is a definite failure to tackle language problems, and commensurate educational retardation. This is exacerbated by subject teachers (other than English teachers) themselves having restricted command of the language and in consequence exposing classes to substandard language, thereby undermining the work of the English teacher.

1.2.4 Tertiary level At the University of Malta both English and Maltese are official languages and lecturers have the right to use either language for lecturing and teaching. In practice, English is the general medium of instruction. At the Polytechnic English again is generally the medium for academic degree and diploma-level courses, but for lower level (eg Craft) courses, there is greater use of Maltese (see para 2.4.2.3).

1.2.5 Communication Maltese is the national language of Malta. Both English and Maltese are official languages and the Administration, may under the Constitution, use either. Maltese is the prescribed language of the Courts of Law. The House of Representatives may use either in parliamentary proceedings, but in fact use Maltese. The Government Gazette and all laws are published in Maltese with a parallel English translation. Legal contracts are in Maltese except where English is more efficient (eg in contracts with foreign organisations). In Administration nearly all Government Departments use English throughout, though circulars sometimes are issued with a Maltese translation. The press: there are two English dailies, one weekly and an enlarged Sunday edition of one of the dailies, whose combined circulation covers about 50% of the total newspaper readership. Local Radio and TV are in Maltese for News, discussions and locally produced material, but much use is made of imported British and American entertainment programmes. Italian TV is also received and is widely followed. Cinema is mainly English language. Business, industry, trade are conducted mainly through English. International relations and communications are conducted in English. In private industry, unskilled labour and agriculture, English is not necessary. In public and professional examinations English is obligatory, as also in most vocational courses and examinations (eg nursing). Professional, technical and non-technical literature: nearly all literature and publishing is in English. However, Maltese literary production, hitherto negligible, is growing. More books have been published in Maltese in the last five years than ever before. A few have gone into second editions.

2. English within the educational system

2.1 Primary

2.1.1 The Primary School Syllabus, which is a loosely compiled general statement, places English and Maltese under the single heading of 'Language Skills' for the first three years of primary school. Its somewhat highsounding, and perhaps dubious, general aim is to 'transform a mono-lingual child into a bilingual one', an aim which, needless to say, is seldom realised, except by chance or through factors outside the school. Under 'Basic Skills' the objectives listed are: to develop in the child the ability to:

2.1.1.1 express himself confidently, clearly and accurately;

2.1.1.2 read with fluency, interest and understanding;

2.1.1.3 begin to express his thoughts in writing;

which have the truth of triteness and the authority of oracle. Similarly noble sentiments ('to cope adequately with his environment', 'to develop a love of reading for its own sake', '(provide) ordered living and sense of security'), appear under other headings, but with no indication as to what is to be done in the classroom or what language content work is required to be covered.

2.1.2 The present syllabus came into force in 1970, replacing an earlier, rather more detailed edition, which was in many ways more useful, but which was perhaps over-prescriptive. However, its merits and demerits are largely irrelevant to the many teachers who have never seen it, a copy being kept locked in the head's office of each school and available for consultation. Teachers in general rely for their classroom success on experience, intuition and recollections of training, with the result that standards of teaching and learning range from the superb to the abysmal. Circulars concerning the use of particular books (eg the Ladybird Keyword Reading Scheme) are indeed issued from time to time by the Department of Education, but teachers lack schemes of work and are reluctant to produce their own.

2.1.3 The syllabus for the second three years of primary is more detailed and generally more useful, in that it contains practical suggestions for activities and ways of handling different types of work, which more properly belong to a teacher's companion than to a syllabus, but it is still not an explicit statement of work and nowhere reveals what is meant to be done. Thus teachers other than natural diviners are left unenlightened.

2.1.4 The number of periods per week devoted to English throughout the six years of primary is between seven and nine. A substantial part of this time is devoted to the teaching of reading and, more especially, to developing the reading skill to a standard which will enable the child to cope with a large part of the secondary curriculum in English (see paragraph 1.2 English as a Medium of Instruction). The staple course for this purpose is the Ladybird Reading Scheme including the Keyword books, a fairly wide variety of the supplementary titles and, from 1977, the tapes accompanying the Reading Scheme. The great emphasis currently being placed on the teaching of reading arises (a) from the need to maintain standards, and (b) from the fact that the Primary target of reading proficiency is not always being reached. Formal reading of English is not taught in Primary Year 1, thus allowing Maltese reading to become established before the reading of the second language is begun. However, in Year 1, a general audio-lingual (visually aided) reading-readiness programme is carried out, using the vocabulary and material of Ladybird Band 1, and an attempt is made to make children orally proficient in the material before they meet it in printed form. This works fairly satisfactorily, and the reading scheme proper is begun in Year II, and is carried through until Year VI, up to or close to Band XII, for pupils who can cope with it. The importance attached to reading, and the disproportionate demands it makes on the timetable, tend to overshadow other aspects of the English course, to the detriment of the other skills, notably speaking and listening. Further, the Ladybird Keyword Reading Scheme is strictly a reading scheme, not a language course, and consequently contains no parallel graded language work. Some teachers construct their own parallel language exercises, which although ungraded, show commendable initiative on their part, but in general the tendency is to rely for language work on separate language courses (eg Better English) which are unrelated to Ladybird, are confusing to learners and increase the burden of material to be assimilated. For the same reason, there is the further tendency to revert to outdated or substandard reading comprehension/language books for the wealth of haphazard linguistic and extra-linguistic material they contain. These are undoubtedly stimulating to children's imaginations, because they range in experience far beyond the Ladybird series, but they are open to the criticism that theyare non-functional in approach, and they are therefore sternly, perhaps too sternly, discouraged. Examples are:

The Path to English, Fundamental English, Commonsense English, The Way to English, First Aid in English, The Wild Thyme Readers, The Slow and Sure Reading Book.

2.1.5 The best teachers with the best classes nevertheless manage to do commendable work with these and other books, employing intelligent group work methods, training pupils in oral reproduction, and composition and devising realistic classroom situations for dramatisations of simple dialogues, and for role playing.

2.1.6 Examinations in years I-V are on a school basis with guidelines issued by the Education Department. These are carefully prepared by the Test Construction Unit working with the Primary Education Officers, the English Education Officers and the Department's Adviser on the Teaching of English (see paragraph 2.5). At the end of year VI the National Year VI Primary examination is held. This is set centrally by the Test Construction Unit with the EOs and English Adviser. It is a standardised objective graded attainment test and is intended to be used partly as an aid to streaming pupils for secondary form I and partly as a means of identifying possible primary Year VI repeaters.

2.1.7 Statistics 1976/77

Number of Government primary schools in Malta and Gozo	100[1]
Total number of children attending primary school (Years 1-6)	23,500
Approximate number of teachers teaching in primary schools	1,050[2]

Notes:

1. 1977/78: 96 (a few boys and girls segregated schools have been merged to form mixed schools)

2. does not include head teachers or primary teachers deployed elsewhere

2.2 Secondary

2.2.1 Syllabus

The same general remarks may be made of the secondary school syllabus as of the primary syllabus, except that there is evidence of greater care in its compilation and an absence of lofty platitude. It contains a variety of useful suggestions for activities, so-called 'schemes of work' and an appendix on methodology guidelines, which, again are not part of a syllabus proper. Again also, although the general statement is more useful, it does not go beyond the barest pointers towards content work and leaves the reader guessing as to what is to be taught. However, qu'y faire,no teachers that the writer has met, other than heads and heads of department, have ever seen it, despite attempts to give it wider circulation two years ago! The secondary syllabus is a differentiated syllabus (see below) and sets out to cater (a) for pupils of average, below average, and above average ability; and (b) for two streams of pupils, one a 'GCE' stream and the other a 'CSE' stream.

2.2.2 The differentiated syllabus: streams and options

For the first two years of secondary school (Forms I and II) all pupils, except those in remedial classes, follow a single 'common core' syllabus. The only form of differentiation is contained in the appendix on Recommended Supplementary Readers, which is divided into three sections, for average, above average and below average pupils. Up to the present it has been impossible to observe these distinctions, since with the introduction of comprehensive education in 1972 and the abolition of internal examinations, official policy has discouraged streaming by ability and has so far as possible, enforced mixed ability classes and automatic promotion. However, with the introduction of annual national secondary examinations in 1974 and a national primary final examination in 1977 for placement purposes in secondary, a limited form of 'selectivity' is reappearing - the term 'streaming' is rigorously avoided - and schools are once again, greatly to teachers' relief, able to implement a semblance of grouping by ability, at least during the first two years of secondary. Even before the re-introduction of examinations, the larger schools were practising unofficially their own form of streaming more or less out of an instinct for self-preservation. Pupils from the remedial classes re-join the mainstream of the school after form II, but are likely to be seriously behind in English and other subjects. Their re-emergence can be a disaster to themselves and a disruption to others.

2.2.3 The second three years (forms III, IV, V) presents a more complex picture, there being two 'schemes of work', one labelled GCE intended for pupils who will sit the GCE 'O' level examinations at the end of form V, the other labelled CSE and defined euphemistically as being designed for those students who 'take a non-specialist broad course in English Language and Literature and may (sic) be examined at the end of their final year in secondary school', but in practice being a watered down version of the GCE course, for students who have no hope of reaching GCE standards. There are two glaring and calamitous weaknesses in the system. One is that - after five years in operation! - there is no terminal or recognised CSE examination for the CSE streams: they literally 'may be examined at the end of their final year in secondary school' by sitting the Form V national examination, a qualification which has no recognisable standard, no status and which offers no incentive. The other is that only a minority of secondary school pupils are GCE potential and these, owing to the operation of the 'Options' system (see 2.2.4) and the existence of some relatively small schools, have up to the present been taught in the same classes as the CSE majority, to the detriment of both.

2.2.4 Options

Recent re-organisation has established two major turning points in secondary education. At the end of form II all pupils will choose for form III onwards one of the six options which are listed below by subject and number of periods per week. Their choice might entail a move to a different school, and is sometimes made with this in mind, rather than for the sake of the option itself!

Option A: History/Geography/Art/Music

Religion	3
Maltese	3
English	6
Foreign Language (the same taken in I and II)	4
Arabic	2
Mathematics	5
Int.Science	3
History of Malta	2
Social Studies	1
Physical Education	2
History/Geography/Art/Music (one of)	4
	35

Option B: Languages

Religion	3
Maltese	3
English	7
Foreign Language (1) (the same taken in I & II)	4
Arabic	2
Mathematics	5
Int.Science	3
History of Malta	1
Social Studies	1
Physical Education	2
Foreign Language (2) (one of Italian, French, German, Latin)	4
	35

Oprion C: Science

Religion	3
Maltese	3
English	5
Foreign Language	4
Mathematics	5
History of Malta	1
Social Studies	1
Physical Education	2
Physics	3
Chemistry	4
Biology	4
	35

Notes i. The foreign language above has to be one of Italian, French, German, Arabic

ii. Students may also opt for two Sciences, viz: Physics and Chemistry or Chemistry and Biology. In this case 5 periods will be devoted to each subject and there will be one period at Head's discretion.

Option D.1: Craft

Religion	3
Maltese	3
English	5
Foreign Language (the same taken in I & II)	4
Arabic	2
Mathematics	5
Int.Science	3
History of Malta	1
Social Studies	1
Physical Education	2
Craft	2
Technical Drawing	4

Option D.2: Home Economics & Needlework

Religion	3
Maltese	3
English	5
Foreign Language (the same taken in I and II)	4
Arabic	2
Mathematics	5
Int.Science	3
History of Malta	1
Social Studies	1
Physical Education	2
Home Economics	4
Needlework	2
	35

Note i. HE and NW will alternate 4 and 2 every week

Option E: Commercial/Secretarial

Religion	3
Maltese	3
English	6
Foreign Language (the same taken in I & II)	4
Arabic	2
Mathematics	5
History of Malta	1
Social Studies	1
Physical Education	2
Commerce	4
Accounts	4
or	
Shorthand	4
Typing	4
	35

Note i Only students with 80% or more in the Annual Examinations in Maltese, English, Foreign Language and Mathematics will be allowed to take this option.

2.2.5 English thus receives six periods in Option A, seven in Option B, and so on - in fact, the lion's share of the curriculum. To that extent it would be true to say that English is not badly provided for, if it were also true that exposure to English were sufficient to meet the demands of the GCE language and literature syllabus. Students doing the GCE 'O' level literature paper in the 'language' option do, however, need more than seven periods a week in forms IV and V if they are to cover the literature syllabus adequately. Likewise, students good in English in a non-Language option do not have the opportunity to offer Literature, because the number of periods is insufficient. Nevertheless, given timetable and curriculum constraints it would probably be unrealistic to expect more.

2.2.6 On paper the options system appears sound. In practice it has run into serious difficulties, because again owing to time-table constraints, lack of streaming and the selection of the options by the pupils themselves, it has seldom been possible to separate 'GCE' streams from 'CSE' streams, and a normal situation in schools has been that pupils of various option groups who are notionally preparing for GCE in English are taught together with those who are not and who may be of widely different ability. The absence of a clearly defined 'GCE option' as early as form III which will enable a form V to function truly as such, has caused teachers much frustration, and it remains to be seen whether the proposed new limited form of streaming will lead to an improvement. The separation of streams will, in any case, remain difficult in the small schools.

2.2.7 The second major turning point comes at the end of form III, when all pupils will opt either to apply for admission by examination to the Trade Schools, or to continue their education in forms IV and V of the Secondary school, following the same options as before.

2.2.8 Statistics (1976/77)

2.2.8.1

Number of Government Secondary Schools in Malta and Gozo	Boys	18	
	Girls	23	
	Total	41	
Population (boys and girls)			18,800
Approx number of pupils attending forms I-III			13,300
Approx number of pupils who transfer to Trade Schools			1,900
Number of Trade Schools in Malta and Gozo	Boys	9	
	Girls	5	
	Total	14	
Population Trade Schools (B 2600 G 8))			3,400
Approx number of pupils who continue at Secondary forms IV & V			5,500
Approx number of pupils in Secondary form v	Boys	600	
	Girls	1500	
	Total	2100	

Approx number of pupils who take GCE English Language 'O' level	950
Approx number of pupils who pass GCE English Language 'O' level	225 (23.6% of entry)

Approx number of teachers teaching English in Government Secondary Schools	200

Secondary Education for All, Introduced 1970, comprehensivisation (1972) and the raising of the school leaving age to 16 (1974) produced a major increase in GCE 'O' level entries in 1976, an absolute increase in the number of passes and a percentage decrease in the national average pass rate. The trend towards increasing entries, a small absolute increase but relative decrease in the number of passes continues.

2.2.8.2 Approximate figures for Private schools are:

Population at Primary level			7500
Population at Secondary level:	forms I-III	2500	
	forms IV-V	4500	7000
		Total	14500

The percentage pass rate at GCE 'O' level is higher than in Government schools and raises the all-Malta national average to 26%.

2.3 Upper Secondary (the VI forms)

2.3.1 Government Secondary schools comprise forms I-V, with GCE 'O' level or the National V form examination as terminal goal. Secondary school pupils who wish to carry their school education up to 'A' level will, if they have achieved the required 'O' level passes and grades, proceed to the Upper Secondary School in Valletta, or to the Upper Secondary school, Victoria, Gozo (attached to Victoria Boys Secondary School). Otherwise, post 'O' level work may be done at the Technical Institutes or on Craft courses at the Polytechnic. The Upper Secondary School in Valletta is an amalgam comprising the former Government VI forms merged with the former Junior College of the University of Malta. It functions virtually as a VI form college offers a two-year course in three 'A' level subjects and is geared almost exclusively to University entrance requirements in which respect it has sometimes been criticised for over-rigidity in outlook there being little opportunity for extension courses or a broad-based curriculum in non-examinable subjects. Some students, in order to enhance their University entrance chances, prepare privately for one or sometimes two additional 'A' level subjects and frequently enter for these during their first year at Upper Secondary. It is not unknown for a student to present himself for one of his additional 'A' levels before entering Upper Secondary, though this tendency is being checked by the greater importance now attached to the grade obtained than to the number of passes.

2.3.2 The English Department is well staffed and ably directed. The quality of the work done is commensurately high, with adequate 'A' level standards maintained, even though the quality of the first-year intake is felt by staff to be indifferent. The syllabus is

is tied to the Oxford Delegacy A4 Eng
Malta, and the work is hence entirely
these constraints, however, the cours
certainly thorough. An anomaly so fa
that no student without 'O' level Lit
course, which itself has a heavy lite
intended as a University entrance Cou

2.3.3 A somewhat similar situation o
Gozo, except that curriculum range, i
more limited, staff are generally les
achieved are not so high.

2.3.4 In the private sector, a few c
maintain their own VI forms, but in t
route to A4 level is, again, through
private schools, however, have a VI f
boys schools with VI forms allow an i
so that there is, in fact, a minor al
Private schools, being more 'client c
are more flexible as regards curricul
to follow a one or two subject 'A' le
'A' level passes in private school VI
Government Upper Secondary Schools.

2.3.5 Statistics (1976/77)

Total population of Government Upper
Schools (Malta and Gozo)

GCE	'A'	level	English	candidates	(Ma
"	"	"	"	passes	(Ma
"	"	"	"	candidates	(Go
"	"	"	"	passes	(Go

2.4 Tertiary

2.4.1 The University of Malta

2.4.1.1 The Department of Engl
Faculty of Arts leading to a BA
degree, and courses leading to
thesis. The MA course requires
have obtained First or Upper Se
admitted. A PhD degree requiri
full-time study abroad, has rec
has so far taken one. In addit
Department as a subsidiary to a
of the two main subjects for th
description of the courses, syl
structure, etc,, see the Liter
brief, however, candidates for
8 3-hour papers, a long essay
compulsory papers (i) Literary
Language; (iii) Shakespeare an
out of English Literature 1579-
English Literature 1780-1837,

(v) a special subject or special author from the following: Chaucer, Contemporary Literature, Aspects of the Italian Influence on English Literature, Classical Civilisation and Culture; and three special papers which may be either the three History of Literature papers listed under paper (iv) in addition to the one already selected; or (vi) Linguistics and two out of (vii) Aspects of Transformational Grammar, (viii) Theory and Practice of Language Teaching (ix) Psycholinguistics. Students taking English as a subsidiary to another Honours subject follow the first year only of the English Honours course. Candidates for the BA General Degree with English as one of two main subjects follow part of the English Honours course and are examined after three years in four papers: (i) Modern English Language, (ii) Early 19th Century English Literature Texts and two out of (iii) Practical Criticism; (iv) English Literature 1350-1674; (v) 18th Century English Literature; (vi) Shakespeare & Contemporary Dramatists; (vii) Victorian Literature. The syllabuses are thus a fairly close parallel to those for British Honours and General degrees, and the examination papers are a fair reflection of the standards obtained. Standards are high, and a student who obtains a First or Upper Second Class Honours is well qualified to proceed to a higher degree either in Malta or in Britain.

2.4.1.2 University entrance requirements are set out in the University Calendar. Briefly the general requirement is either eight passes at an approved examination, two of which passes must be at the 'Advanced' level, or seven passes, three of which must be at the advanced level. The approved examinations for this purpose are either the Matriculation & Advanced Matriculation examinations of the University or the GCE examinations held by one of the approved examining Boards. The subjects chosen must include English Language, Maltese, a foreign language, mathematics or a science subject and one of the humanities. From 1978 one of Italian, French, German or Arabic will be the compulsory foreign language. Course requirements vary from Department to Department but will normally include an 'A' level pass in at least the subject of the course. In English, three 'C' grade 'A' level passes (or equivalent, eg B, C, +D) are needed to enter the General Arts Course, and a 'B' grade with 2 'C's to do Honours in the 'B' subject.

2.4.1.3 The Department has a Language Laboratory which provides courses in Phonetics and Intonation for all 1st year English Department students. Materials used include O'Connor and Arnold, Halliday and locally produced. There is also a 1st year class in Varieties of English, using the Dickinson course. In the 2nd and 3rd years the Language students come to the Laboratory for part of their course work in the Modern English Language paper, using British Council produced tapes on language teaching. Students also come individually and voluntarily for listening practice. In addition, the Language Laboratory has its own 20-booth Sound Library with a stock of 10,000-12,000 tapes and records, in 15 languages including English, available for use by bona-fide persons from outside the University for language learning purposes. These include, for example, foreign teachers in Malta, Chinese students and students from the Manoel Theatre Academy of Dramatic Art. A nominal fee may be charged to private persons. There is also a recording studio, used mainly for recording locally produced language laboratory course material. Finally, the

Laboratory possesses sophisticated fast-copying equipment for duplicating sets of its own material, but also available to Government and outside bodies for copying other materials, including commercially produced, where copyright permission has been given. A recent example of this service was the copying of the six Ladybird Keyword Reading Scheme tapes for 100 Government primary schools on blank tape donated by the British Council. In all 600 reels or cassettes were distributed to schools (see paragraph 6.1).

2.4.1.4 Special Courses The English Department holds a special course in language of one academic year for Chinese students of English, and an annual 6-week summer school for Libyan teachers of English. Both have up to now been directed by the British Council subsidised Lecturer.

2.4.2 Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (The Polytechnic)

2.4.2.1 In Departments other than the Department of Educational Studies, which is referred to in detail separately in this Profile (para 3.1.2 ff), English is taught by the staff of the Department of General Studies, known also as 'English and General Studies'. In the Engineering Department, which prepares students for the Ord. Tech. Dip (Mech E) and (Civ E) and Higher Tech Dip (Mech E) and (Civ E) examinations of the City and Guilds Institute, English and General Studies does a 'servicing' job in English, by means of a course leading to an 'English for Technical Students' examination, including essay and report writing with an EOP bias, with a certificate for successful candidates. The certificate has internal validity only and was designed for non'O' level holders. In the Catering Department, likewise, General Studies 'services' the Diploma in Hotel Management course, and the Receptionists and Tourism certificate courses, with approximately six hours per week of syllabus-planned work, including periods in the Language Laboratory for the Receptionists and a Project for the Tourism students. In the Department of Business Studies, English is an integral part of all courses, Diploma in Business Studies, Supervisory Management and Secretarial. All years will get at least 3-4 hours including correspondence, report writing, essays, conversation and a project, with laboratory work extra. In General Studies itself, in addition to the servicing role carried out by staff, a special paper, Man in Society, is taught for degree courses and is taken by the Chartered Engineers. The Language Laboratory in the Polytechnic belongs to the Government International School at the Cultural Centre, Floriana, but is housed at the Polytechnic on the inventory of the Department of General Studies.

2.4.2.2 Business and General Studies staff also teach in the Department of Educational Studies (q.v.) (3.1.2 ff).

2.4.2.3 In general, English in the Polytechnic has a vital EAP and EOP role. Where it is not an integral part of a course, the purpose of instruction is simply to make students 'better communicators'. The written medium is practically 100% English. Lecturing is approximately 50% English, 50% Maltese, depending on subject, and oral work (discussion, seminars etc) again approximately 50%. In Educational Studies, the medium is principally English, with pockets of resistance.

2.5 The Education Department

2.5.1 The Education Department, headed by the Director of Education with responsibility to the Minister, has direct and centralised control over all Government primary, pre-primary, secondary, upper secondary and trade schools, the educationally sub-normal children's school, the technical institutes and the Polytechnic (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology). It has jurisdiction over appointments, curriculum and syllabuses, textbooks and teaching materials, tests and examinations and all facilities, maintenance and amenities. It also exercises certain controls (eg over curriculum) in the private sector and, where there are capitation grants, reserves the right to inspect.

2.5.2 Within the Department, among the special sections (eg Special Education, Test Construction Unit, Planning Unit) is the Inspectorate, comprising some 30 Education Officers, six of whom are Primary Education Officers, and the remainder, for the most part subject EOs. In 1976 two Education Officers (English) were appointed, and one Adviser on the Teaching of English was seconded to the Department by the British Council under the Aid to Commonwealth English (ACE) scheme with responsibilities including assistance with or advice on syllabus revision, review of national primary and secondary English examinations, modification of pre-service and in-service training programmes, investigation of needs in ESP, re-appraisal of the role of radio and TV in ELT and the selection and distribution of textbooks. Prior to 1976, there had in fact been an ACE specialist (Mr M N Hughes) seconded to the Department (1968-1972) and an Inspector of English, Mr Romano Bonello, was appointed. However, the sudden and untimely death of Mr Bonello in 1974 was a serious blow to the teaching of English and left the subject temporarily without supervision. The 1976 appointments were therefore badly needed and were seen as especially important in restoring direction in teaching and confidence among teachers.

2.5.3 The two Education Officers are highly qualified ELT specialists with excellent teaching and teacher training experience. Together they provide exactly the right balance of professional expertise necessary on the one hand to guide teachers, and on the other to advise the Director of Education on the co-ordination of teaching of English in schools and to assist in the implementation of the policy. They work as a team with the ACE specialist in visiting schools, observing classes, identifying problems, giving practical advice and suggestions on classroom techniques and methods. They have a general though undefined brief to coordinate the work of Heads of Departments of English recommend on schemes of work and syllabus revision and, in particular, on the selection and distribution of textbooks and readers. One of them is a member of the Schools Broadcasting Advisory Committee. Work on textbook selection in the secondary sector although badly needed has to date been singularly unsuccessful, since the matter passes out of EOs hands after the recommendation stage, and ordering has sometimes been done, no doubt owing to financial considerations, without reference to the recommendations made. More of EOs' time than one would wish is perhaps inevitably, spent on routine matters, petty administration and clerical work, and there is also a continuing uncertainty as to the permanence of their appointments, since both have applied for other posts and if their applications are successful, the schools will once again be left without specialist ELT guidance until replacements are appointed. At the time of writing, one is on secondment to the Polytechnic as Lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies, pending a possible permanent appointment.

2.5.4 Other appointments made in 1976 which were of great value were the ten Heads of Department of English in Secondary Schools, nine in Malta and one in Gozo. In the larger schools the Heads of Department have an important role, and all of them are regularly available for liaison with the Department of Education. Their help, for example, is required in the setting of the national Secondary examinations forms I-V, which is done, as for Primary, by the Department's Test Construction Unit in collaboration with the English EOs and the English Adviser. Additional Heads of Department are, of course, needed so that all schools or all areas are provided for.

In general it may be said that the Department of Education exercises a benevolent despotism over the whole school system. It suffers, as Departments do, from bureaucratic creaks and administrative grinds and is grossly over-centralised. It is thus predictably inefficient in some aspects of its work, but astonishingly efficient in others.

2.6 Trade Schools

As indicated elsewhere in this Profile (para 3.4) English teaching in Trade Schools is not satisfactory. They suffer from shortages of qualified staff (para 3.4), lack of adequate syllabus and suitable textbooks and insufficient English timetabling. Instructors work in difficult conditions conducive to poor standards of teaching, and in certain schools in 1976/77 students did not receive the full number of English lessons provided for on the timetable. In the past a seriously heterogeneous intake has led to uneven teaching situations, with problems at least as acute as those in unstreamed secondary schools, aggravated by students' own misconceived notions of a Trade School as the easy, non-academic way out of secondary education. Wide range of objectives within the Trade School complex and within the same Trade School makes the problem even more intractible. These, together with English objectives, need to be defined, but the English Education Officers in the Department of Education have not as yet been able to give time or attention to them, as they are more than fully occupied with the Primary and Secondary schools. If there is hope of improvement in the Trade Schools, it stems from the fact of entrance by competitive examination from 1977/78, which will have the effect of raising the standard of intake even though it will, at the same time, leave the uncreamed pupils behind in Secondary schools to struggle on, if they can, towards GCE.

2.7 Schools Broadcasting

2.7.1 Television

'English is Fun' for Secondary Schools (form I) (14 programmes of 20 minutes each) is now three years old and had its last run in January-April 1977. It is now to be dropped and will not be replaced. This means that there will be no English by TV for secondary schools in 1977/78. 'Merry-go-round' for Year 3 primary level (8 programmes of 20 minutes) is also to be dropped, but will be replaced by a new 10 programme series entitled 'Hello' currently being prepared by the English sub-committee of the Schools Broadcasting Unit. The series will be for the same age-group, but of a slightly lower level and within the limits of the Ladybird classification. Transmissions are scheduled to begin in January 1978.

2.7.2 Sound Radio

The Schools Broadcasting Unit transmits a structurally graded series

of programmes for Primary Years 3-6. There are between 12 and 17 programmes for each year, and the School Broadcasting Magazine 'The Young Listener' is available to pupils and to teachers (with teachers' notes) at a subsidised price. Cards are issued to listeners, and each school gives a weekly report on the success and popularity of the programmes. One of the Education Department's English EOs chairs the English sub-committee engaged on script-writing. The British Council makes available the BBC/BC/ODM ELT materials for schools.

2.8 Evening Classes

Evening classes organised by the Department of Education cover all school subjects, including English. Accelerated courses for GCE subjects are held, in particular GCE 'A' and 'O' level literature. Classes are attended both by adults and by school pupils

3. Teaching Cadre

3.1 Teacher Training

3.1.1 Teacher Training has had a chequered and, at times unhappy history in Malta, in that the period of minimum provision coincided with the period of maximum need. The earlier edition of this Profile refers in paragraph 3.1.2 and 3.2 to 'the two colleges of Education'. These, the Mater Admirabilis, for women, founded in 1944 by the Nuns of the Order of the Sacred Heart and state aided, and St Michael's for men, founded in 1944/45 and staffed mainly by the De La Salle Brothers under Government direction, no longer exist. Courses were originally 1 year, non-residential for primary school teachers. Students were pre-selected and, because of the shortage of teachers, could be given a promise of appointment on completion of the course. In the 1950s the Nuns built a new college from their own funds at Tal Virtu, and a new man's college was built at Ta'Giorni with a grant from the Commonwealth Welfare and Development Fund. The 1-year courses became residential, and in 1956 both courses became 2-year with University of London Institute of Education moderation. There was entry for 60 men and 120 women (with limited entry from outside the Education Department) and entrants frequently had qualifications higher than the minimum entry requirements. Training was still for the primary level, but in the 60's teachers were being 'promoted' from primary to secondary schools, and in the 70's training was for secondary, with teaching practice in the secondary schools.

3.1.2 In 1971 a programme of reform under a new Labour Government included the secularisation of teacher training, abolition of residence and a more pragmatic type of course. 1972 saw the amalgamation of the two colleges, lay staff, the end of the agreement with the Nuns and the withdrawal of the Brothers. A British Principal, CWDF funded, Mr John Weeks, was appointed. There was no new intake for the first two years, but in 1973, the training course was raised to three years, and with the first intake, the system of automatic appointment for student teachers was ended - appointments in future depending on vacancies and specialisations. In 1974 the first 1 year postgraduate certificate course was held, and graduates, together with the 3 year certificate holders applied for vacancies through the Public Service Commission. Finally, in 1975, the Training College at Ta'Giorni was sold to the Government of Libya and teacher training was transferred to the Department of Educational Studies on the 3rd floor of the Polytechnic as an economy measure, rationalisation and exploitation of resources.

3.1.3 The college was thus abolished and the loss to teacher training was great. Functioning as a Department within the Polytechnic, it lacked identity, autonomy, facilities and the sense of dedication among staff. Moreover, staff changes and other uncertainties produced frustrations. All English teaching staff in the DES were (and still are) either part-time or seconded from schools. Up to 1977 there has been no substantive appointment of Lecturer, but one is imminent at the time of writing (see para 2.5.3).

3.1.4 Up to and including 1976/77 the Department has conducted:

3.1.4.1 the 3-year teacher's certificate course;

3.1.4.2 the 1-year postgraduate certificate course;

3.1.4.3 the 1-year course for Libyan teachers

3.1.5 All first year students following the 3-year course, no matter what their subject specialisation, took an 8 unit (1 term) course of Language Study, including English, designed to give a general view of important aspects of Language, and a weekly lecture on the methodology of teaching English at primary level. This was followed by a 5-term course (years 1 and 2) of Curriculum Studies (English) presenting the practical issues involved in teaching English as a second language and covering spoken English, Reading, Language and Literature. Students specialising in English ('English Mains ' - only those with an 'A' level pass in English) (about a dozen in Year 1 76/77, 4 in Year 2 and 11 in Year 3) followed an additional 9-term main English syllabus, designed to cover the following four areas:

3.1.5.1 English Language - content

3.1.5.2 English Literature - content

3.1.5.3 The methodology of English Language Teaching

3.1.5.4 The methodology of English Literature Teaching

In addition they followed a 6-term course of 'Subsidiary English' (later discontinued) in years 2 and 3 covering selected areas of content and method not included in the Curriculum Studies English Syllabus, and produced teaching materials as part of assignments. The English mains students specialist workload was approximately 3 hours per week in year 1, 6 hours in year 2 and 7 hours in year 3. Teaching practice was carried for about 5 weeks in each year in the primary and secondary schools. Tutorials in the 3rd year might take the form of school visits. The purpose of the 3-year course was to prepare teachers to teach from Infant level to Secondary form III. Many however, saw their work as mainly in secondary schools and would have done well there, although all to date have been deployed to primary schools (see paragraph 3.4).

3.1.6 The One-Year Postgraduate Teacher's Certificate Course offers a special method (English) 3-term syllabus, consisting of an approach to the methodology of English Language and Literature teaching at the secondary level and including only those aspects of primary method which have a direct bearing on secondary school teaching. The approach is problem and seminar based, and there is extensive production presentation and assessment of teacher-training material. There were

17 postgraduate students doing English, out of a total of 40, in 1976/77 The postgraduate course has been the least satisfactory of the DES courses, partly because of its brevity and partly because of the wide variety of qualifications of the graduate intake.

3.1.7 The One-Year Course for Libyan Teachers is based on a 3-term syllabus covering:

3.1.7.1 content (Structure and Spoken English, Language, Literature, Phonology)

3.1.7.2 Teaching of English (Language, Literature, Testing and related topics).

3.2 Teacher Training in 1977/78 and after

3.2.1 1976/77 was the last year to accept a 1st year intake for the 3-year certificate course, and for students enrolling in 1977/78 and after, this becomes a 4-year course with the 3rd year devoted to part-time teaching practice and some attendance at evening lectures. The course trains for both primary and secondary levels and remains a Certificate course, with the proviso that Government has discretion to terminate it as such and convert it to a BEd degree course, pending discussions with the University of Malta. However, owing to uncertainty both as to entrance requirements and as to the ultimate qualification to be awarded, enrolment to date has been so low that there is doubt at the time of writing whether there will in fact be a first year at all in 77/78. The attitude of many prospective candidates is that with roughly equivalent entry qualifications they would be better served by taking a University 3-year degree course, followed if they wished, by the postgraduate certificate course, and higher grade appointment prospects, all within the same period of 4 years! If no first year is started in 77/78, the Department's intention is to accept all eligible candidates for the postgradute course, giving a course membership of about 60, instead of the normal 40.

3.2.2 Meanwhile, the remaining part of the Department's programme (the postgraduate course and the course for Libyan teachers) continues as the old 3-year course becomes phased out, the last 3rd year finishing in 1978/79.

3.3 Facilities

Facilities at the Polytechnic available to the Department of Educational Studies include the Polytechnic library, which has a substantial section on language, linguistics and methodology donated by the Ministry of Overseas Development through the British Council and a large inheritance from Mater Admirabilis and St Michael's training colleges; an audio-visual aids centre (reasonably well equipped but understaffed) which is used principally by teachers under training, but which is technically available to all serving teachers; and a language laboratory, which services all the DES courses together with the servicing courses carried out by the General Studies Department (see paragraph 2.4.2.1)

3.4 General

All teachers in Government Schools and institutions and private schools are Maltese nationals. Teachers of English in Government Secondary Schools normally hold one of the Teacher's Certificates referred to above, but the position as regards qualifications is somewhat obscure because of:

3.4.1 a history of absorption of Emergency Teachers, and

3.4.2 movements from Primary to Secondary Schools to teach English with less than the English mains qualification of the TTC and occasionally without English 'A' level.

However, so far as English is concerned, current supply exceeds demand: qualified teachers of English teach other subjects, and all students coming out of the DES with Mains English have been deployed part-time at the Primary level. Some of these could do excellent work at Secondary. At the Primary level all teachers are teachers of English and most are qualified. In the private sector teachers are fully qualified at the best schools, but at others, some male teachers are to be found teaching English with 'A' level qualifications only. At the Trade Schools, many staff are part-time untrained instructors, paid at a different rate from part-time teachers and occupying a lower status, while some are trained full-time instructors of 'Technical Reporting'. They may also be instructors of a technical subject, topping up their timetable with English or Maltese. The few 'visting teachers' are also minimally qualified and frequently untrained. Teachers, however, who hold the DES Certificate have full professional status. The awarding authority is the Polytechnic 'in conjunction with the Institute of Education, University of London', which moderates examination papers and supplies external examiners.

3.5 Professional Associations

The Graduate Teachers Association is in correspondence with the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language and intends to set up a Malta Branch.

3.6 In-service training

In-service and vacation courses for teachers of English have been held from time to time (1973 and 1974). The most recent was the in-service course for teachers of English in the upper forms of primary and lower forms of secondary schools organised in March 1977 by the Department of Education in collaboration with the British Council and attended by some 200 teachers from both private and the government sectors. The aim of the course was to concentrate on the general transition problems in English of pupils moving from Primary to Secondary and on the problem of coping with a secondary curriculum in English. The course was directed by the English Adviser seconded to the Department of Education by the British Council, assisted by the Department's English EOs. Dr Geoffrey Broughton was principal lecturer. Further courses are planned for 1978 and 1979.

3.7 Statistics

For figures of teachers serving in Government primary and secondary schools, see paragraphs 2.1.7 and 2.2.8.

4. Teaching Materials

4.1 Primary

The principal materials used are given in paragraph 2.1.4. In addition the Primary School Syllabus lists in Appendix B (q.v.) a variety of titles for simple reading for Years 1, 2, 3 with a view to 'filling the gap during the transition period' and recommends head teachers to select their own titles. Appendix C lists titles:

4.1.1 for school reference

4.1.2 for teachers only

4.1.3 for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6

The books for pupils are again readers, chosen mostly from the New Oxford Supplementary Readers (OUP). As has been stated (paragraph 2.1.4) the emphasis is on developing the reading skill, and the most serious shortage still to be remedied is that of language textbooks.

4.2 Secondary

The secondary school syllabus lists textbooks in detail year by year in separate and lengthy appendices. These are divided into:

4.2.1 'Books for Teachers'
4.2.2 'Books for Pupils'
4.2.3 Readers (novels, stories, drama) for average, above average and below average pupils
4.2.4 separate sections in forms III and above for the GCE and CSE streams (see paragraph 2.2).

There is some unsuitability of titles, particularly for girls, and there are shortages of sets of supplementary readers. A perennial problem is distribution and circulation of sets. An inefficient system has aggravated existing shortages. Further, the GCE streams lack a language course specifically geared to the London Overseas GCE 'O' level English Language paper. Ordering is done centrally, but recommended lists made with the best of intentions are subject to stringent economy measures.

4.3 Theoretically the centrally prepared syllabus prescribes uniformity in schools. In practice, however, the transition to comprehensive education, mixed ability classes, the raising of the school-leaving age, expediency and instances of lack of familiarity with the syllabus make uniformity difficult to implement, and schools and individual teachers occasionally make use of particular textbooks, or sets of titles, previously declared obsolete, simply because they like them or simply because they are there, whether they are on the syllabus or not. Instances of this may occur when there is a shortage of the prescribed titles. There is, therefore, a mixed picture of uniformity and diversity, though change in policy may perhaps lead to greater uniformity than hitherto.

4.4 Malta lacks a well staffed language resource centre, the AVA Centre at the Polytechnic (para 3.3) meeting only the needs of teachers under training. Use, therefore, of tapes, films and other aids is minimal, although one important step forward in 77/78 has been the provision of tape or cassette recorders to all primary schools, concurrently with the supply of ancillary materials and the tapes (donated by the British Council) for the Ladybird Keyword Reading Scheme. In general, however, reading cards, workbooks, pictorial and recorded material are lacking. It is worth noting that the copying of the Ladybird tapes was done at the University Language Laboratory (see para 2.4.1.3) not at the AVA Centre.

4.5 Individual heads and teachers in primary schools have made commendable efforts to devise their own language materials to fill the gaps mentioned in 4.1 and 4.2 above, and the Department of Education, through the EOs, English Adviser and Heads of Departments, encourages teachers to produce their own schemes of work.

5. English outside the Educational System

5.1 The Ministry of Education International School of English conducts a course in English of 2-3 weeks' duration for foreign students aged 18+ (Scandinavian and other European nationalities) at intervals throughout the year. Its main activity is the six special 3-week courses, plus one course for Italian Military Mission personnel, held between July and September. The 1977 Summer courses had an enrolment of over 400 students and were directed by one of the Education Department's EOs, with a staff of a dozen Government teachers for each course. All courses were purely on English Language, except the last one, which contained an element of methodology for members who were hoping to become teachers. The Ministry of Education is considering the possibility of establishing the International School of English on a permanent basis with its own Director and staff.

5.2 The National Students Travel Service in conjunction with the Extension Studies Board of the University of Malta, also conducts highly successful 3-week summer courses on a commercial basis for foreign students aged 16-60 (mostly 18-20) from Italy and other European countries. In 1976 seven courses were held, with a total enrolment of 550 students. The 1977 enrolment exceeded 1,000! The courses are well staffed and ably directed, though most of the teachers are from the private sector, government teachers needing special permission to undertake private vacation work.

5.3 The successful operation of the Government International School and the NSTS Summer Schools, with their growing enrolment, is an indication of the large pool of professional expertise and the great potential that Malta possesses for establishing itself as a Mediterranean ELT Centre.

5.4 There are officially no private schools of English in Malta, but there is a vacuum which would quickly be filled by them, seeing the need for further English among the Maltese themselves and the attractions that Malta offers as a Centre for courses, if Government permission were given for private schools to operate. There is, therefore, an opportunity for Government to enter the field on a large scale itself or to throw it open to the private sector.

5.5 Government teachers are forbidden to undertake private tuition or coaching (eg for GCE and public exams). Although many, no doubt, do some coaching unofficially, the effect of the prohibition is to force the cramming industry into private, though not necessarily unqualified hands.

6. British Support for the Teaching of English

6.1 The British Council

6.1.1 By no means all British Council activities in Malta are directly connected with ELT, but most of them, in particular the British Council library of 20,000 books, 86 newspapers and periodicals, 2,700 members and 43,000 issues in a year, the Council's Cultural programme of films, lectures, exhibitions and recitals, the establishment in cooperation with Malta Government of Manoel Theatre Academy of Dramatic Art with two ODM-financed Drama Advisers, and a flow of specialist tourists in a variety of academic and professional fields are a direct or indirect stimulant to English. More specifically, a British Council officer is seconded to the Department of Education under the ACE scheme as Adviser on English Language Teaching (see

paragraph 2.5.2); the post of Professor and Head of Department of English in the University of Malta is subsidised by the Council, as also up to 1977 was the post of Lecturer and Director of the Language Laboratory; in-service courses are organised by the Department of Education with a British Council Director, or a British Council Specialist Tourist as principal lecturer (see paragraph 3.6); scholarships, bursaries, Hornby Trust studentships are awarded in English and ELT; British Council ELT Book Exhibitions are held; substantial British Council and ODM ELT book presentations are made to the school, Polytechnic, University and Public libraries (notably a massive donation to the Public Library at Beltissebh when it was established); three British Council presented language laboratories are in use in Malta; ELT hardware and the software are presented or put on long loan to the University, the Polytechnic and the Department of Education (a donation of 600 tapes and cassettes was recently made, supplying all primary schools with a complete set of the tapes accompanying the Ladybird Keyword Reading Scheme); specialist ELT films ('The Bellcrest Story', 'Teaching Observed', 'Using Magazine Pictures', 'Slim John') and feature films of GCE prescribed books are made available to select institutions. 'Walter and Connie' has been shown on Malta Television; ELT and literature material (including the BBC/BC/ODM ELT materials) is made available to the Schools Broadcasting Unit of Malta Broadcasting Authority, and finally, there is British Council involvement in a wide range of activities all closely or less closely related to English or ELT, in fields for example as far apart as the International Conference on Bilingualism at the University of Malta, April 1976, and the examining of MA theses and viva-ing of Honours finalists by the ACE officer, or the administering of UK tests of proficiency in English and the answering of Educational enquiries by the Council's Cultural and Education Officer.

6.1.2 Together the above amounts to massive ELT support, to which great importance is attached by the profession and by the educated general and professional Maltese public.

6.2 Other British support

This is difficult to measure and would require a definition of terms. The interest taken in Malta by British publishers and the predominance of British textbooks are an obvious factor; the size of the British community, the presence (until 1979) of British services and the large element of British tourism are no doubt, also, important intangibles. The teaching practice in Maltese primary schools undertaken annually for one month by about 40 postgraduate students of the University of London, Institute of Education Department of English as a Foreign Language brings about valuable contact between Maltese teachers and their British and foreign counterparts. Similarly useful contact used to exist when Mater Admirabilis teacher trainees went to the British Services schools to observe infant methods. This of course will now be missed, together with the other contacts brought about by the schools. Possibly, however, still the most important single factors in support of English are the long historical association between Britain and Malta and the continued existence of a close, albeit changing, relationship between the two countries. The linguistic heritage that has come down from colonial times Malta is reluctant - and would be foolish! - to discard.

7. American support for the Teaching of English

7.1 The United States Information Service

ELT is not a high USIS priority, but everything that the USIS does, is nevertheless, an indirect support for English. The principal support activities are:

7.1.1 Distribution of English Teaching Forum to secondary schools, technical institutes, the Polytechnic and the Ministry of Education. About 40 copies (formerly 20) are distributed bi-monthly.

7.1.2 Maintenance of a 1,000 book reference library and 35 periodicals at the USIS office in Valletta;

7.1.3 Maintenance of a film loan library of 350 films. Loans are made to schools, clubs, associations, etc.

7.1.4 Book presentations: presentations amounting to approximately 1,000 books a year are made to school and university libraries. School book prizes are also presented.

7.1.5 The USIS administers locally any grantees in Malta under the Fulbright Foundation programme. These to date have been American University academics, not necessarily in the field of English, doing a sabbatical year, and filling one-year supernumerary posts of Professor at the University of Malta. In the early sixties, Professor John Pick lectured for one year on English Literature. After Pick the posts lapsed until 4 years ago, since when they have been re-filled in a variety of fields, in 76/77 by John Atherton, Professor of American Literature, and in 77/78 by Charles Jellison, Professor of American History. In March 1977 the USIS organised a one-week Seminar on American Nobel prize-winners in literature. The speakers were Professor Atherton and others specially invited to Malta for the Seminar. Attendance was around 30 and included the Director of Education, Education Officers and teachers of English from the University, the Polytechnic and Government and private secondary schools.

Representative titles by Hemingway, Saul Bellow, William Faulkner, Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, Eugene O'Neill (though significantly not Pearl S Buck) were presented.

7.2 The American University of Cairo

A branch of the American University of Cairo was established in Malta in 1977 by special agreement between the University and the Government of Malta. It is a training University, with emphasis on engineering, technical, commerce and business subjects; stipulated standards have to be observed, and under the agreement, a specified number of Maltese students must be trained and a proportion of Maltese teachers employed. A Maltese Government nominee sits on the Board.

7.3 The International School, Verdala

The International School, Verdala, was established in 1977 by special agreement between the Governemnt of Malta and the American Oil Company, Reading and Bates, to provide a full range of primary and secondary education on the American system for the children of employees of the company who work through the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Under the agreement

100 free places must be offered to Maltese children, who may enter by selection at form IV or form VI level, and specified science facilities must be provided. The headmaster and most of the staff are American, and the curriculum is geared to American qualifications. A Maltese Government nominee sits on the Board. The medium of instruction is English and the education provided would be regarded as 'prestigious' by Maltese parents who wish their children to be exposed to English and mix with foreigners. To date there is an enrolment of about 500.

7.4 Other American support

No American scholarships in ELT are awarded in Malta, but there is a small miscellany of grants and awards in other subjects, including for example a 1-year grant to a social worker and 1-month visitorship programmes, and visitorships for specialists in the education of the handicapped and disabled. A College in Iowa has a special link with the University of Malta to bring 12-20 students to Malta for two-month periods in Mediterranean Studies. An earlier link of the same kind with the State University of New York lapsed some years ago, but may be revived.

8. General Statement

8.1 The situation is paradoxical. Malta is at certain levels, but not at all, a bilingual nation. There is a wide upper, middle and lower-middle social spread, embracing the professions and the business community, with a command of English which would be the envy of educated classes almost anywhere in the world. These people learnt their English during the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods by traditional teaching methods and often in schools where a fine was imposed for the use of Maltese - an era which has clearly passed and cannot return. Malta also possesses a body of teachers, educated in the same conditions, which, despite criticisms, produced not only an elite, but a wide spread of English speakers. The teaching cadre, despite some maldistribution and administrative inefficiency and despite the fact that more children at school are being taught English than ever before, is sufficient to cope with foreseeable ELT needs if it is properly harnessed. There is, moreover, a pool of highly trained, UK qualified professionals with specialist ELT expertise capable of handling all training needs with little or no specialist advice from overseas - a concentration, in fact, quite remarkable in so small a country. Malta has, then, both potentially and actually, all the resources necessary to maintain existing standards of English. There are no problems which are not soluble by the Maltese themselves, and if Malta wishes to retain her pricesless linguistic heritage, she has only to harness her resources within an Education system over which Government has full control, and - to put it crudely - get on with the job.

8.2 It is, then, puzzling to the observer that so little effort is made in this direction and that, on the contrary, the conditions necessary for learning and using English are progressively eroded and that minor disincentives and deterrents are continually created, which, if unchecked will result in English shortly having no more than a foreign language role. The paradox is simply that although it is recognised that maintenance of high standards of English is essential, there is a reluctance to admit that the substitution of Maltese at all possible levels will inevitably result in a lowering of standards and ultimate atrophy.

8.3 Thus, teachers (and others) are unclear about the role and aim of English in Education and national life. They are confused over educational reforms and lack the support of a delcared language policy. "A clear and

public re-definition of the role of Eng
Phillips - Brumfit Survey, paragraph 4.
likely to be uttered and what teachers
amount of textbook selection, syllabus
will provide a substitute for it.

8.4 In matters of detail, the various
system have been indicated at the appr
Lack of inter-subject correlation - th
notion - tends to isolate English as a
between the primary, secondary and tra
for the ROSLA explosion, and insuffici
and EOs before introduction of reforms
centralised administration. What shou
major weaknesses can ultimately be tra
consistent and declared policy. An ex
fact that the terminal educational goa
and that a CSE-type alternative has so
quite naturally ask towards what, then
of options (2.2.6) Trade School (2.2.7
intake at various levels is to cream a
leave 'the rest' for GCE, in many case
it. This brings into question the fut
Language examination in Malta, yet thi
trovertible and generally accepted evi
may well be true that its very existen
an 80% fall-out, but in the creamed-of
secondary schools, it could hardly do

8.5 Teachers, Heads and Education Off
minor successes in their own schools a
will not remedy the general shortcoming
above are met.

9. Current Research and Bibliography

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If this profile is more than a year old further up-to-date information may be found in ETIC Archives.